

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 05011 090822Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SES-02 SSM-03 AID-05 CIAE-00
COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11
TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01
NSC-05 SS-15 STR-07 CEA-01 IO-13 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 L-03 PA-01 DOE-15 SOE-02 /146 W
-----058065 101021Z /10

R 090710Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3330
INFO EC COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 5011

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, NL, XF
SUBJECT: THE NETHERLANDS AND THE ARAB BOYCOTT

REF: A) THE HAGUE 4345; B) BRUSSELS 15562; C) THE HAGUE 4551

1. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THE HEARINGS HELD LAST WEEK BY THE SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING THE ARAB BOYCOTT WITH SEVERAL MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (HARRY VAN DEN BERGH - LABOR PARTY CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE; NICO SCHOLTEN - CDA; AND FREDERIK PORTHEINE - LIBERAL). THE COMMITTEE HEARD A TOTAL OF 35 WITNESSES, INCLUDING DAN HALPERIN OF THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF FINANCE, MOAZ EL AZEM FROM THE ARAB LEAGUE OFFICE IN BRUSSELS, ARNOLD FORSTER OF THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF THE U.S., AND DUTCH REPRESENTATIVES OF TRADE UNIONS, EMPLOYERS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE.
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AS A RESULT OF THIS HEARING AND OTHER STEPS IT HAS TAKEN IN ITS INVESTIGATION, THE COMMITTEE IS CONVINCED THAT THE ARAB BOYCOTT HAS HAD AN EFFECT ON DUTCH FIRMS, ALTHOUGH IT IS UNABLE TO PRESENT DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE OF THAT EFFECT.

2. THE COMMITTEE HAS NOT YET DECIDED ABOUT ITS NEXT STEPS. IT IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE AN INTERIM REPORT TO THE CHAMBER ON

SEPTEMBER 20 AND WILL PROBABLY DECIDE IN THE DRAFTING OF THAT REPORT WHETHER TO PROCEED WITH CALLING REPRESENTATIVES OF INDIVIDUAL DUTCH COMPANIES; THE CHAMBER HAS SUBPOENA POWER AND WITNESSES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO APPEAR AND TESTIFY UNDER OATH.

3. IT ALSO IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER DRAFT LEGISLATION WILL RESULT FROM THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION. SUCH LEGISLATION COULD BE EITHER AIMED AT SPECIFIC BOYCOTT FEATURES, SUCH AS STATEMENTS TESTIFYING THAT NO BUSINESS IS DONE WITH ISRAEL, DECLARATIONS THAT JEWS ARE NOT EMPLOYED BY THE FIRMS, ETC., OR IT COULD BE GENERAL LEGISLATION WITH BROADLY WORDED PROHIBITIONS. PARTY POSITIONS ARE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR BUT IT APPEARS LIKELY THE LABOR PARTY WOULD SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND THE LIBERALS WOULD OPPOSE IT BECAUSE OF THE UNFAVORABLE IMPACT ON BUSINESS INTERESTS. THE CDA IS SAID TO BE UNDECIDED.

4. ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE IS THAT THE CHAMBER MIGHT RECOMMEND TO THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT SEEK A COMMON EEC POSITION ON STRENGTHENING OPPOSITION TO THE BOYCOTT. VAN DEN BERGH SAID THAT THE COMMITTEE IS AWARE THAT SUCH A RECOMMENDATION MIGHT ENCOUNTER A VETO FROM FRANCE (FOR A DIFFERENT VIEW SEE REFTEL B), BUT HE DID NOT ANTICIPATE DIFFICULTIES WITH ITALY. HIS BELIEF WAS BASED PARTLY ON A REMARK BY HALPERIN TO THE EFFECT THAT THE ITALIANS WERE NO PROBLEM FOR ISRAEL BECAUSE THEY WOULD SIGN ANYTHING THE ARABS DEMANDED OF THEM
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AND THEN TURN AROUND AND CONTINUE TO DO BUSINESS WITH ISRAEL. THE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE CONSIDERATION OF THIS SUBJECT BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT AND HAS NOTED THE RECOMMENDATION LAST WEEK BY A SPECIAL BRITISH COMMITTEE THAT LEGAL MEASURES AGAINST THE BOYCOTT NOT BE ADOPTED.
JOSEPH

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Message Attributes

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